Netiquette at the New Hampshire Community Technical Colleges

Netiquette defines appropriate communication in the online environment including email, Blackboard online classroom/discussion boards, websites, blogs, instant messaging, etc.

The New Hampshire Community Technical Colleges encourage common courtesy in all forms of communication to promote effective and positive interactions.

Consequently, when using Internet based communication, students, staff and faculty are encouraged (and in some cases required by civil rights law) to follow the netiquette practices below:

1. Please avoid using **all caps**. It is often interpreted as shouting.
2. Please avoid using **red and bold** fonts to avoid conveying anger to your reader.
    - Also, colors do not photocopy well and may not appear on printed documents if the color ink cartridge is old.
    - In addition, the colors red or light green cannot be seen by color blind people ("red and green cannot be seen").
3. Avoid offensive language of any kind. Using email to harass others in a sexual, racial or other prejudicial manner violates civil rights laws.
4. Avoid forwarding a message or attachments without the author's permission. Asking for permission demonstrates your integrity in personal and business communications.
5. Avoid **flaming** – the expression of extreme emotion or opinion in an email
    - Misinterpretation of an email followed by an impulsive email response increases the probability your recipient will also respond emotionally making the situation worse. "Act in haste, repent at your leisure."
    - Emotionally charged email can be printed out, forwarded to many people instantly and may acquire a level of importance that was never intended.
    - If you are a student and feel someone is being harassing, demeaning or abusive, please contact the instructor immediately.

6. Use a clear email subject line that relates directly to your message. Consider it to be the headline of a news article.
    - Use an inverted pyramid form of writing with the most important statements in the first paragraph. Follow up with supporting details.
    - Keep paragraphs short for easy reading. Use blank lines between paragraphs. State your recommendations for resolving a problem.
    - Request action - tell your recipient what you need. Be clear and concise.
7. Avoid acronyms or abbreviations unless your entire audience is familiar with them.
8. When using email, avoid instant messaging shorthand such as u for you.
9. Use spell check and take time to proof read your email. Electronic communication may be the only impression someone has of you.
10. Be careful – email stands on its own merit, often without context, and may be instantly forwarded to many people.
11. Be forgiving of mistakes. If you decide to inform someone of a mistake, be polite and inform by private rather than public email.

For more information:

www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/

www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

Distance Learning Collaborative
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